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Preparing to Take an Online Exam

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Taking an online exam can be convenient and can make answering certain types of questions easier, but it adds some preparation work. We've compiled some recommendations for you to make sure technology doesn't get in the way!

It may feel overwhelming, but we are here to help, so if any of these steps are unclear, please contact Wharton Computing Client Support Services.

We suggest you save a copy of this article to your computer or print one out to have on hand during an exam. Click here to save an offline copy.

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Preparation Steps

- **Computer/Device:**
  - Use a device that meets Canvas's basic computer specifications. Always make sure to use the most up-to-date versions of your operating system.
  - Approximately 24 hours before your exam, check your computer for any critical updates. Install any that are necessary and restart—you don't want to get prompted to install them during your exam!
  - If you are taking an in-class exam on your own computer, ensure it is fully charged on the day of the exam, as limited power outlets may be available in the classroom.

- **Browser:**
  - Use one of Canvas's supported web browsers. We recommend the most up-to-date versions of Chrome or Firefox for the best performance.
  - Some browser extensions and security settings may interfere with taking an online exam. If possible, temporarily disable browser extensions and allow 3rd-party tools before starting your exam.
  - Clear your browser history/cache and cookies, then restart your computer the day of or the day before your exam.
    - Click the link for your particular web browser for instructions on clearing your cache (it will open in a new tab)
      - Chrome / Firefox / Safari / Edge
  - ***Open the exam in only one browser window***. Using multiple windows might make you overwrite your answers.

- **Internet:** Be sure your computer is connected to AirPennNet (not the guest network). If you're taking a timed Canvas exam and lose your connection, the timer will continue to run.
- **PennKey**: Some exams and computer labs may require you to sign in with your PennKey and password. Make sure you know your PennKey password and have your phone with you for two-factor authentication. Use the

Test My PennKey app if you want to confirm your password.

- **Laptop v. Mobile:** Use a laptop or desktop computer. Taking exams on small tablets or phones provides a limited experience. While you can submit many assignments and quizzes on the Canvas Student mobile app, not all quick features are supported.

- **Notifications (and other Distractions):** Close or disable notifications, pop-up blockers, and other applications. Certain exam tools, such as Respondus LockDown Browser, will require you to close all messaging and screen recording apps before you can start taking the exam.

- **Respondus LockDown Browser:** Your professor will let you know if Respondus LockDown Browser is required for an exam. Please contact Client Support Services if you have trouble downloading it and provide the name of the course that is using LockDown Browser for exams.

- **Timed Exams:**
  - **Only begin a timed exam when you're ready to complete the exam**. The timer continues to count down regardless of whether you are actively taking the exam or not.
  - Remember to click **Submit** before the time expires.
  - **If you have an accommodation for exams, confirm that your time limit and exam availability window are correct before starting.**
    - Contact your professor immediately if you notice a problem with the exam timing, and do not start the exam until it is fixed.

- **Untimed Exams:**
  - For exams without a time limit, **close the browser window when you aren't actively working on it.** This will prevent you from losing any responses if Canvas automatically logs you out after a period of inactivity. You can always reopen the exam and resume where you left off.
  - **Submit your exam before the due date.** If you don't, you could get locked out of the exam and need to contact your professor for help.

- **File Uploads:** If your exam requires you to upload a document (e.g., Word or PDF file), save your work frequently and save the final version to your computer. Remember where you saved the file, so it is easy to find and upload to Canvas. Give yourself at least 5 minutes to select and upload your file in Canvas, as uploads can sometimes take a few minutes.

- **Check before Submitting:** Only click Submit when you have finished the exam. **You cannot reopen submitted exams.**

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Dealing with Internet Connection Issues

If your internet disconnects while taking an exam, here are some steps that should help.

1. **Take a deep breath** - things will be ok!
2. **Take a screenshot** or other copy of your work for reference. If your exam uses Respondus LockDown Browser, let your proctor know you are having trouble and ask if you can use your phone to capture screenshots.
3. **Take note of any error messages.** Share these with your Professor and Client Support Services.
4. **Toggle wifi off/on** and try to connect to AirPennNet (or your home network).
5. **Try switching internet browsers.**
6. **Restart your computer.**

7. If you still have trouble connecting, contact student support by phone at (215) 898-8600.

If you encounter any technical issues while taking an exam, contact Client Support Services.

- Phone: (215) 898-8600
- Email: support@wharton.upenn.edu